

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 6786

FODAG

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: UN, EAGR, OCON
SUBJECT: MAREI'S CANDIDACY FOR RE-ELECTION AS PRESIDENT OF THE
WORLD FOOD COUNCIL

REF CAIRO 6507

SUMMARY:

THE EGYPTIAN NOTE NOMINATING SAYED MAREI FOR RE-ELECTION AS
PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL STATES POINTEDLY THAT HE WAS
ELECTED FOR A TWO-YEAR TERM IN JUNE 1975, INDICATING THEREBY
THAT HE EXPECTS TO CHAIR THE MAY 1977 PREPARATORY MEETING OF THE
WORLD FOOD COUNCIL, EVEN THOUGH THE MAY MEETING IS THE BEGINNING OF
THE THIRD CYCLE OF MEETINGS. THIS IS OF COURSE A PLOY TO GET
ADVANTAGE IN HIS COMPETITION WITH TANCO OF THE PHILIPPINES FOR
THE PRESIDENCY. THE FILIPINOS IN ROME HOPE, HOWEVER, THAT MAREI
WILL NOT IN FACT COME WHEN HE LEARNS THAT THEY HAVE THE AFRICAN
BLOC AS WELL AS THE ASIAN AND LATIN AMERICAN COMMITTED TO THEIR
CANDIDATE, ARTURO TANCO. THIS MEANS THAT WE SHOULD HAVE ALTER-
NATIVE POSITION PAPERS ON THE CHANGE OF THE BUREAU IN THE WORLD
FOOD COUNCIL--ONE BASED ON THE CONTINGENCY THAT MAREI AND THE
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OTHER OFFICIALS CONTINUE THROUGH THE PREPARATORY MEETING, AS THE
OTHER ON THE CONTINGENCY HE AND OTHERS WILL BE REPLACED AT
THE BEGINNING OF THE PREPARATORY MEETING. IN ANY EVENT, WE
SUGGEST THAT WE DISABUSE THE EGYPTIANS TACTFULLY OF ANY IDEA
THAT WE WILL SUPPORT MAREI. THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, WHO WILL MAKE
THE BASIC CHOICE, DO NOT WANT HIM, THEY DO WANT A GENERAL
ROTATION OF LEADERSHIP, AND MAREI DID NOT REALLY FULFILL HIS

RESPONSIBILITIES DURING HIS PAST TENURE. THERE SHOULD BE NO IMPLICATION IN THIS THAT WE ARE DOWNGRADING EGYPT'S POLITICAL PRIORITIES WITH THE UNITED STATES. END SUMMARY

1. WE HAVE RECEIVED, BELATEDLY, A NOTE BERBALE FROM THE EGYPTIAN PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO FAO, DATED MARCH 28, ON THE CANDIDACY OF SAYED MAREI FOR RE-ELECTION AS PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL. THE NOTE IN ROME ESSENTIALLY INFORMS REPRESENTATIVES OF MEMBER GOVERNMENTS THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY COMMUNICATED WITH THEIR GOVERNMENTS ABOUT THIS CANDIDACY. THE ROME NOTE DOES NOT INCLUDE SPECIFICALLY THE KEY POINT IN THE CAIRO NOTE (REFTEL) THAT MAREI WAS ELECTED FOR A TWO-YEAR TERM IN JUNE 1977--MEANING THAT HE EXPECTS TO PRESIDE OVER THE PREPARATORY MEETING IN ROME IN MAY 1977.

2. IN THE MONTHLY CONSULTATIONS ON PREPARATIONS FOR THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL MEETING OF 1977, AND IN PRIVATE EXCHANGES, MOST COUNTRIES HAVE TAKEN THE VIEW THAT THE CHANGE OF OFFICERS SHOULD TAKE PLACE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PREPARATORY MEETING, TO PROVIDE MUCH-NEEDED CONTINUITY BETWEEN THAT MEETING AND THE LATER MINISTERIAL MEETING. THE WFC SESSIONS IN 1975 AND 1976 WERE TROUBLESOME AND LARGELY UNPRODUCTIVE, AND EVERYONE APPRECIATES THE IMPORTANCE OF DOING EVERYTHING THAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE PROSPECTS IN 1977.

3. THE TWO-YEAR TERM IS AT BEST A TECHNICALITY. IT HAPPENED THAT IN THE FIRST YEAR, THE WORKING-LEVEL AND MINISTERIAL MEETINGS OF THE WFC WERE HELD END-TO-END, WHILE IN 1976 AND 1977 THEY HAVE BEEN SEPARATED. MAREI'S MOVE TO CONTINUE PRESIDING IS OBVIOUSLY A PLOY TO IMPROVE HIS PROSPECTS FOR RE-ELECTION. IRONICALLY, HE DID CONFIDENTIAL

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NOT SEE FIT TO ATTEND THE PREPARATORY MEETING IN 1976, AND HE ABSENTED HIMSELF, WITH NO APPARENT REASON, FROM THE CRITICAL CLOSING DAY OF THE MINISTERIAL MEETING IN 1976. THIS ABSENTEEISM FROM HIS RESPONSIBILITIES AS PRESIDING OFFICER, TOGETHER WITH DELAYS IN NEGOTIATING WITH THE OPEC COUNTRIES BECAUSE HE DID NOT KEEP HIS COMMITMENTS TO VISIT THEM ARE THE PRINCIPAL REASONS WHY FEW OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES NOW FAVOR HIM AS A CANDIDATE FOR RE-ELECTION AS PRESIDENT.

4. THE FILIPINOS HERE ARE HOPEFUL THAT MAREI WILL IN FACT DECIDE NOT TO COME TO THE PREPARATORY MEETING WHEN HE LEARNS THEY HAVE NOT ONLY THE ASIAN AND LATIN AMERICAN BLOC BUT ALSO THE AFRICAN BLOC COMMITTED TO TANCO OF THE PHILIPPINES AS PRESIDENT. A RELIABLE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL SECRETARIAT SOURCE REPORTS THAT THE FILIPINOS INTEND TO USE THE APPROACHING MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC TO NAIL DOWN SOLID ASIAN SUPPORT FOR TANCO.

5. UNCERTAINTY ABOUT MAREI'S ATTENDANCE AT THE PREPARATORY

MEETING MEANS THAT WE NEED TWO POSITION PAPERS--ONE BASED ON HIS COMING, IN WHICH CASE HE WOULD MOST CERTAINLY PRESIDE, AND THE OTHER BUREAU OFFICERS WOULD CONTINUE FOR THAT MEETING, AND THE OTHER ASSUMING HE WILL NOT COME AND THERE WILL BE A NEW ELECTION AT THE OUTSET OF THE PREPARATORY MEETING. LANDYMORE (U.K.) HAS TALKED INCONCLUSIVELY WITH GROUP-77 REPRESENTATIVES ABOUT HIS OWN PROSPECTS FOR THE RAPPORTEUR POSITION. GROUP-77 AS SUCH HAS REACHED NO DECISIONS. IF MAREI COMES TO THE PREPARATORY MEETING AND PRESIDES OVER IT, THEN THE OTHER OFFICERS INCLUDING LANDYMORE WILL PRESUMABLY CONTINUE ALSO. LANDYMORE AS RAPPORTEUR IN THE PREPARATORY MEETING WOULD BE HELPFUL TO US, AND WE COULD THEN TRY TO DIFFERENTIATE THE POST FROM PRESIDING POSTS AND SEEK HIS CONTINUATION IN THE MINISTERIAL MEETING, TO EVERYONE'S ADVANTAGE, WHETHER DEVELOPED OR DEVELOPING.

6. WE REALIZE THAT WE ARE CULTIVATING POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH EGYPT, BUT FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF WORLD FOOD COUNCIL AFFAIRS WE CONFIDENTIAL

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URGE THAT WE DISABUSE THE EGYPTIANS OF ANY NOTION THAT WE WILL SUPPORT MAREI FOR RE-ELECTION TO THE WFC PRESIDENCY. WE COULD MAKE THE POINTS GENERALLY AND WITH THE EGYPTIANS THAT THE CHOICE IS BASICALLY FOR THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO MAKE AND THAT ALL OF THEM SEEM TO BE IN FAVOR OF A GENERAL ROTATION IN LEADERSHIP. TO THE EGYPTIANS PRIVATELY WE MIGHT POINT OUT THAT MAREI'S PERFORMANCE AS PRESIDENT WAS NOT IMPRESSIVE. WE REALIZE HE HAD REQUIREMENTS IN EGYPT THAT OCCUPIED MUCH OF HIS TIME, BUT SOME OF HIS ABSENCES AND MISSED APPOINTMENTS WERE NOT EXCUSABLE, AND GREATLY IMPAIRED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL AND INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT. AND WE COULD SAY TRUTHFULLY TO ALL THAT OUR NOT SUPPORTING MAREI DID NOT IN ANY SENSE IMPLY ANY DISREGARD OF OUR CLOSE RELATIONS WITH EGYPT.GARDNER

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